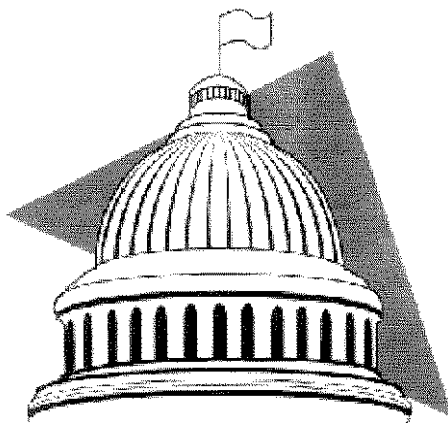


# Legislative Initiatives



The FVAP continuously analyzes legislation in the 50 states and five territories that affects the voting process for UOCAVA citizens. Further, we closely coordinate with the U.S. Congress on pending legislation that may impact citizens covered by UOCAVA and the NVRA. In this capacity, each year the FVAP sends legislative initiatives to states and territories for consideration and regularly provides expert testimony before Congress and state legislatures on issues concerning voting legislation.

Additionally, the FVAP is frequently asked by Governors; Secretaries of State; State Election Directors; the International Association of Clerks, Recorders, Election Officials and Treasurers; the International Institute of Municipal Clerks; the National Association of Secretaries of States, the Federal Election Commission and various other national and state organizations to speak on legislative issues at conferences and other meetings.

Also, the FVAP works with state and local governments to assist them in pursuing state-initiated legislative initiatives to make changes in elections laws to ensure UOCAVA citizens are not disenfranchised. In this effort, we coordinate with State Governors, State legislators, Attorneys General, Secretaries of State and Directors of Election. The specific legislative initiatives the FVAP requests states and territories to consider are as follows:

1. **45-Day Ballot Transit Time**

We ask the states to allow a minimum of 45 days between the date the ballot is mailed out to the voter and the due date by which the voter must return the voted ballot to the local election official. This would be especially beneficial for citizens voting from overseas and APO/FPO addresses.

2. **Elimination of the Notary Requirement**

Notarization of voting materials can be cumbersome, difficult to obtain, and quite expensive in some foreign countries. We recommend this requirement be fulfilled by allowing citizens to execute a self-administered oath on all voting materials: FPCA, ballot return envelope and state registration forms, where applicable.

3. **Late Registration Procedures**

Often the date of discharge and a state's registration requirements combine to disenfranchise discharged citizens of the Uniformed Services or citizens returning from overseas employment. Allowing these citizens to register past the regular deadline for registration, even on the day of the election, would prevent their disenfranchisement.

*Exhibit 4*

4. **Special State Write-In Absentee Ballot**

Submariners, Peace Corps volunteers, missionaries and many other citizens stationed in remote locations and unable to receive regular absentee ballots sent in the normal time frame, would be provided with a state write-in absentee ballot that would allow them to write in the name of their candidates or party preferences. Unlike the Federal Write In Absentee Ballot (FWAB), which usually allows voting *for Federal offices only*, the Special State Write-In Ballot would provide a *full slate* of offices to be voted.

5. **Reference to the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act in the State Election Code.**

This will help election officials and interested citizens find guidance to applicable Federal law and increase their familiarity with the statute and its application.

6. **Electronic Transmission of Election Materials**

While most election materials are sent by mail, legislation providing for this alternate method of transmitting election materials would allow the voter to fax the FPCA for registration and ballot request to the election official. In addition, the local election official could send the ballot by fax and accept the voted ballot back from the voter where circumstances would otherwise disenfranchise a voter. Since its inception during Operation Desert Shield/Storm, many states have successfully adopted electronic transmission procedures as an alternate method, thereby granting the opportunity to vote to many citizens who would otherwise be disenfranchised.

7. **Expanded Use of the Federal Write-In Absentee Ballot (FWAB)**

Currently, use of the FWAB is generally allowed for Federal offices only. Since this ballot is prepositioned overseas, by expanding its use to include special, primary, and runoff elections, citizens would not be disenfranchised because regular ballots are not received in a timely manner.

In addition, the FVAP asks states to expand the use of the FWAB further and accept it simultaneously for registration and absentee ballot request. It is important to note that the information requested on the FWAB transmission envelope is the same as the information requested from the voter on the FPCA.

8. **Emergency Authority for Chief Election Official**

Granting emergency authority to the chief election official in the state would allow him or her to designate alternate methods for handling absentee ballots in times of a declared emergency.

9. **Enfranchise Citizens Who Have Never Resided in the U.S.**

Approximately 50,000 U.S. citizens who have never resided in the U.S. are not entitled to vote under current law. While they are subject to all other requirements of citizenship, they are not eligible to vote. We ask states to allow these citizens to vote where either parent is eligible to vote under UOCAVA.

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